



Creating a Healthier Minneapolis

healthy eating + physical activity + smoke-free living

Minneapolis Healthy Living Initiative January 2013 Progress Report

The places in which people live, work, learn and play profoundly influence their health. People living in environments where nutritious food and physical activity are available and affordable are less likely to be obese. Likewise, people in smoke-free environments are less likely to suffer from tobacco-related illnesses. Obesity and tobacco use are the most common causes of chronic disease such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes. These preventable illnesses burden individuals and their families and cost the health care system billions of dollars each year.

Through its Healthy Living initiatives, the Minneapolis Health Department and its partners are making long-term, sustainable improvements in schools, neighborhoods, clinics and other settings to support healthy eating, physical activity and smoke-free living. These initiatives are primarily concentrated in Minneapolis communities where up to two-thirds of residents are overweight or obese and smoking rates are two-times higher than the city rate.



MINNEAPOLIS HEALTH DEPARTMENT

250 South Fourth Street, Room 510, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1384 | 612-673-2301 | www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/ship.asp

GOALS

Access to Healthy Food

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Healthy Corner Store Program: In partnership with Appetite for Change and CAPI, the health department conducted “makeovers” at 28 stores, increasing the variety, affordability and visibility of fresh produce. The health department and University of Minnesota are conducting evaluations of customer and sales data. Initial analysis indicates an average 86% increase in fruit and vegetable sales (WIC voucher redemptions and cash) among stores participating in the program.

EBT at Farmers Markets: Thirteen markets across Minneapolis, including 5 mini markets, are equipped with Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems, allowing them to accept food assistance dollars. In 2012, nearly 3,000 people used EBT to purchase healthy food. The markets received more than \$41,937 in EBT sales and \$22,034 in Market Bucks (a matching incentive program) for a total of over \$63,971 in additional income for local growers.

Connecting Cultural Communities to Gardening: Using a “cultural liaison” model, Gardening Matters and its partners (Afro Eco, Waite House and CAPI) connected members of three cultural communities (African American, Latino and Hmong) to gardening and urban agriculture activities within their neighborhood including starting or revitalizing four community gardens. In addition, more than 75 residents of these communities were recruited for the Local Food Resource Hubs Network from which they received access to low-cost gardening supplies, equipment and education.

Healthy Food Shelf Network: The health department convened Minneapolis food shelves and formed the Healthy Food Shelf Network to identify solutions for increasing the amount of healthy food options available to their clients. The Network facilitates relationships between food shelves and local farmers markets, community gardens and retail stores that can provide fresh produce donations. It is also developing standard messaging and materials food shelves can use to request healthy donations from individuals and organizations. Seven food shelves are receiving technical assistance to enhance their healthy food displays, signage and client education materials.

Farm to School: The Minneapolis Public School (MPS) district launched an ambitious Farm to School agenda in 2012, including revisions to existing procurement practices that allow the district to purchase locally grown items from small farmers. Ten MPS pilot schools conducted monthly taste tests of new recipes featuring local ingredients, which were then incorporated into the school lunch menu.

The health department also worked with three catering companies to develop systems for purchasing locally produced foods for the charter schools they serve. Seven charter schools participated in taste testing with students.

Healthy Food Policies: Through workshops and technical assistance, 8 community organizations adopted healthy food policies and practices. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board continues to pursue a healthy food policy and the health department is currently pursuing healthy food policies and practices in after-school programs.



GOALS

Opportunities for Physical Activity

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North Minneapolis Greenway: The health department is collaborating with Minneapolis Public Works to develop plans for a North Minneapolis Greenway. The greenway will convert city streets into a permanent biking and walking corridor. In fall 2012, the health department conducted community meetings and an online survey to gather input on design options and potential routes. Based on this input and support for the project, a planning consultant developed concept designs for a preferred route. A second community engagement process will be conducted January to February 2013.

Complete Streets Policy: Minneapolis Department of Public Works is in the process of adopting a complete streets policy that sets guidelines for streets that are friendlier for bicyclists and pedestrians. Experts from the National Complete Streets Coalition facilitated a policy development workshop with 30 stakeholders in December. Staff members from the health department and public works have identified example policies to use in drafting Minneapolis policy.

Active Recess: Seven elementary charter schools and Minneapolis Public Schools are improving the quality and quantity of active play during recess through training of playground monitors, equipment for group games and improvements to the playgrounds.

Safe Routes to School: Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) continues to expand and institutionalize its walking and biking initiatives. This fall, more than 20 schools and 4,000 children participated in Walk to School events, with many schools participating for the very first time. Six schools mapped walking and biking routes to school, five started walking buses or bike trains where students and parents travel together to school. A middle school hosted a day-long bike safety event and created an after-school bicycle mechanics club. One school started the district's first "Bus Stop and Walk" initiative where all busses drop 300+ students off at a designated location. Accompanied by parents and school staff, students follow a .6 mile route to school, providing weekly opportunities for students who live beyond walking and biking distance to experience active transportation to school.

High quality health care

Clinic Initiative: Eight community-based clinics in Minneapolis have instituted better systems for screening, counseling, making referrals and follow-ups to help patients achieve healthy weight and quit smoking. Two clinics are also institutionalizing best practices to help patients manage chronic conditions such as diabetes.

Smoke-free environments

Smoke-Free Policies in Multi-Unit Housing Properties: The health department is providing support to Minneapolis Public Housing Authority to implement its smoke-free policy in all high rise buildings. In 2013, MPHA will implement the policy in six buildings. The health department and its partners are also pursuing similar policies in 40 additional buildings.

Smoke-Free Campus Policies at Trade and Technical schools: Association for Non Smokers (ANSR) is working with trade and technical schools in Minneapolis to promote smoking cessation, and pass and implement smoke-free campus policies. As of January 2013, Minneapolis Trade and Technical School (MCTC) and Dunwoody Academy are considering smoke-free campus policies.

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Smoke-free environments

City of Minneapolis Affordable Housing Finance Programs: The health department and Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) are adding new requirements into the funding programs for housing projects (new construction and moderate rehab) that receive funding from the City of Minneapolis. The requirements include smoke-free policies and appropriate amenities for physical activity and gardening. CPED has drafted the requirements and presented them to housing developers for input.

Tobacco Retail Project: The health department, ANSR and the Public Health Law Center are exploring options for reducing youth access to tobacco from retail settings.

Resident Engagement in Community Transformation

Healthy Living Grantees: In spring 2012, the health department selected 4 organizations as “healthy living grantees,” which serve as hubs for health-promoting activities. Grantees implement a range of Healthy Living strategies including ensuring access to gardening plots; connecting farmers markets to food shelves; improving corner stores; working with parks to ensure that appropriate physical activity opportunities are provided; and engaging property managers in conversations about smoke-free housing. The four hubs are: Corcoran Neighborhood Organization serving neighborhood residents; Harrison Neighborhood Association and partners, also serving the neighborhood residents; Waite House/Pillsbury United Communities, serving participants in Waite House Programs in south Minneapolis; and WellShare International, serving East African immigrants in Northeast Minneapolis.

VOICE Project (Valuing Our Individual Cultures Through Engagement): Members from six cultural communities participated in story-based dialogues to share their perspectives on the connections between culture, food, healthy weight and body size. The health department developed a video that can be used to spark conversations and initiate individual and community action.

FUNDING PARTNERS

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Communities Transforming
To make healthy living easier



ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AVAILABLE

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